1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515

Cleanliness

It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *ponda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):—

'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in

[285 286]

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[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32.
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *kala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 420 – Russell]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal hunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thovo*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.

[see cat. 116, p. 425. – Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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841 515 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?'. In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their ● [833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 522 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 787 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 776 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Rerela rerela rela rerela

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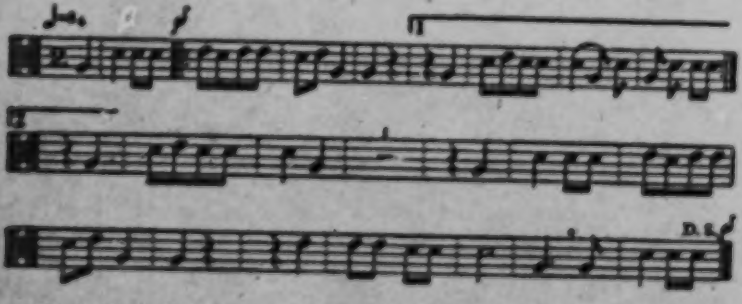
They remind the motiari of her former lovers:

Niya jorta leyur halo adere,	He was your yoke-fellow,
Kotal juri leyur halo adere,	He was your lover,
Ore leyur hunjdi halo adere,	You used to sleep with him,
Narka dhuinga talbindi halo adere,	At night he craved tobacco,[1]
Dhuinga hila indur halo adere.	You said you had none.
Adere dhuinga ãyo halo adere.	But that was not his real desire.
Hawan injur wilindi halo adere.	You denied him and tried to run away.
Leyon tani dilhi halo adere.	But now forever you are leaving him.

They also remind the bridegroom (if he is in the same ghotul) of what he too is going to lose.

How good it would have been had the Raja stayed, O Rani!
He would have been lord of this kingdom;
We would have served him as his servants;
We would have brought our ploughs for his field;
We would have carried his loads without charge.
We would have been given rice as our wages.
We would have carried home his bundles of rice.
We would have brought them from the fields, lifting up our loads.
We would have taken them to the Raja, and he would have paid us our wages, O Rani!

This song is specially appropriate to one of the leaders of the ghotul: other songs have a more general application.



[533]

Dindurãjo jurãjo nona.	The kingdom of the free, lad.
Ido rãjo jnão nona.	You'll never see it more, lad.
Niya wãyna ghotul nona.	You came to the ghotul, lad.
Purudhoro ghotul nona.	Fair as bison-horns, lad.
Ido ghotul do wandir nona.	You used to come here always, lad.
Dãna haido gibi nona.	A sleeping-mat in the left hand, lad.
Tina haido kerga nona.	In the right hand a stick, lad.

[1] To ask for tobacco is the conventional way of inviting a girl to sexual congress.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
787 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thua* is performed.

A *thua* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

751 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescrip-
278 tion of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-oli* and *bhej-oli* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

With reference to those parts of the human body which, because of their intimate conjunction with organs of drainage, suffer an opprobrium both unwarranted and psychologically dangerous, I think much trouble and misunderstanding can be avoided if we observe the world of flowers. Exactly as 'Roses and lilies fair on a lawn' display the sexual parts of the rose and the lily, so, in literal fact, our sexual parts are our flowers, and that is a decent and salutary and sweetening way in which to regard them. . . Prudence is necessary, but not error, and nursery prejudices should not cloud our reason.—Eric Gill, *Drawings from Life* (London, 1940), p. xv.

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THE Muria has a simple, innocent and natural attitude to sex. In the ghotul this is strengthened by the absence of any sense of guilt and the general freedom from external interference. The Muria believe that sexual congress is a good thing; it does you good; it is healthy and beautiful; when performed by the right people (such as a chelik and motiari who are not taboo to one another), at the right time (outside the menstrual period and avoiding forbidden days), and in the right place (within the ghotul walls where no sin can be committed), it is the happiest and best thing in life.

This belief in sex as something good and normal gives the Muria a light touch. Nari's saying that the penis and vagina are *kanni hi sali*, in a 'joking relationship' to each other, admirably puts the situation. Sex is great fun; it is the best of ghotul games; it is the dance of the genitals; it is an ecstatic swinging in the arms of the beloved. It ought not to be too intense; it must not be degraded by possessiveness or defiled by jealousy. It is believed that the best and most successful sex relations are to be had in the modern ghotul where partners often change.

The very idea of a Platonic attachment is ridiculous. Young chelik and motiari may sleep together for a long time without congress, but consummation is the end and goal. 'Thirst is not quenched by licking dew.' Let us consider a remarkable document that was given Shamrao Hivale by the villagers of Palli. A newly-married boy found himself impotent—he had not experienced this embarrassment in the ghotul; it was supposed to have been brought upon him by the hostile magic of a former lover—yet however caused it threatened to destroy his happiness. This is how the other chelik described his wife's attitude—she was only a few weeks out of the ghotul, still practically a motiari. Some of the phrases used are probably traditional, for they occur in songs.

'I didn't come to your house', she is supposed to have said, 'just to eat rice. I could have got rice anywhere. I'm not going to stay here just looking at your face. You may have money, but that can only fill my stomach, not my heart. I could fill my stomach myself by going out to work. Well, now I'm off—anywhere, anywhere in the world so long as my heart can be filled. Where the heart is not filled what girl will stay? God made man and woman for this very work. It was to fill each other's hearts that he made ants, worms, birds, rats, pigs, tigers and every other thing. They all live with their mates and copulate. They all marry and love comes from their copulation. But I don't find love by just looking at your face. If your cart-pole was not in place, what did you marry for?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state *of sannyds* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

832 Although the Muria do not analyse the parts of the body or the face with the
876 care given to this pleasant task by the more sophisticated Indian communities, they have a fully developed aesthetic tradition of the breast. This is natural in a people who but yesterday learnt to cover the upper part of their bodies with a cloth. Even now I have seen in many Muria houses girls husking rice or grinding grain without any upper cloth. When no strangers are about, they still, in the western areas, discard as many clothes as possible. The breasts, so often seen, are always admired. A boy, asked the age of a girl, will answer by showing with his open hands the size of her breasts. 'She may have breasts as big as a coconut, or they may be small as a lemon, but they are beautiful and we love them', said a chelik at Masora. 'A girl's beauty is in her breasts. But'—and this is an interesting point—'the breasts do not remain. After a child is born their loveliness departs. But always there are the shoulders; they never betray us.' In other words, sexual congress demands something to hold—'from holding comes joy indescribable'; in youth a chelik holds the breasts; later he holds the shoulders, and these never betray him, but go with him all his life.

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There are many vivid similes for the breast, a whole vocabulary and system of classification, reminding one a little of Jayle's famous distinction of nine mammary types. As we might expect, several of the chelik's classifications are of small and immature breasts—the *gras dudo*, like half-formed gourds; the *benjri dudo*, like small brinjals at which the boys laugh saying, 'When will the brinjals in your garden be ripe?'; the *bondo-bukh dudo*, like little mushrooms; the *thaka dudo*, like small pots. The *'hosa dudo* are compared to cocoons; they are the breasts of a girl only just mature; and the *wrang kashle dudo* are also immature and 'flat as dog-fleas'.

The breasts of the older motiari are finely developed. Such are the *gutta dudo*—'their youthful strength stands up like pegs'; the *kapa dudo*, the 'ripe brinjal which is fresh and firm'; the *kindri dudo*, of which it is said that 'even if she has five children they will keep their shape'; the *burka dudo*, the large hemispherical breasts of a faithful wife and loving mother; the *marka dudo*, or mango breasts; the magnificent *mirzi dudo*, 'tiger breasts', the best of all, hemispherical with well-marked areolae and a beautiful conical-tipped nipple, whose milk nourishes a child into a young tiger.

Less admired are the *kurbin dudo*, small with long nipples, called 'monkey breasts' in Mandla; the *dhodka* or *torka dudo*, another gourd breast but elongated and weaker which gives poor thin milk; the *chimni dudo*, with long nipples 'like the funnel of a country lamp'; and the *kind dhoti dudo*, the nipples of which are 'like the berries of the chhind shrub'. It is notable that in this group the breasts are classified according to the nipples.

The breasts of older women are the flat *kulta dudo*, the *kurpunj dudo*, long as country shoes and the *tiblo dudo* which 'flop down like dripping water', a description which recalls the expression in Betul Gondi—*dudukh ding-dong ailing*: 'her breasts are dangling like a blanket behind a cart'.[1]

'beauty', but this seems to mean simply 'good to see'. Ugliness is described with more animation. *Sika-arjil* means, in Betul, 'a shock-headed untidy person looking like a savage bear'. *Bukrik korwinga mai* is a 'fat-faced woman'. To call a man *Akilur* in Gondi means he is 'thin as a stick'. Mitchell gives *ojo* as meaning 'ugly' among the Bisonhorn Maria.

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 58. Muria similes for the breast, which may be paralleled by those current among the Baiga (see *The Baiga*, pp. 343ff) must be almost unique for detail and imagination. The Greeks had their *dora fistikonna*; the Arabs admired the pomegranate breast: the medieval German ideal was 'that the breasts should be high and rounded, like apples or pears, small and soft' (Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*,

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her off his mat. When that happens she soon becomes sorry and flings her arms round him saying, 'Why are you angry? We are always together; we will meet tomorrow'. Later, when all are asleep, she opens her cloth and lets him have his way.

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that just as it is the motiari who rule the sexual side and make the sleeping arrangements in the modern type of ghotul, so in both types it is the motiari who take the lead in actual congress. 'When a girl first goes to the ghotul,' said a motiari at Binjhli, 'she is sent to a chelik. She sits down by his mat and says, "Won't you give me a camping-site?" The chelik answers, "Lie down and sleep". The girl is always frightened at first, but she should make no fuss even if it hurts her, for then everyone would hear and laugh. A boy must never ask a girl to sleep with him. It is we who make the arrangements.' 'At first', I was told, 'it is the boy who is shy. But the first long steady look of the motiari encourages him, and afterwards he takes the lead.'

I will give finally a charming record, recorded at Phanda by Shamrao Hivale, of the way a chelik and motiari in love talk to one another.

'All day you were in my eyes,' says the chelik. 'You went to that village, and I kept on looking at it and saying to myself, "She is there".'

'Yes, I went away,' responds the motiari, 'but I felt as if you were just behind me. I could see your shadow by me all the time.'

'All day long I felt as if you were actually talking to me.'

'I said to myself, "Now the sun stands overhead; he must have returned from the jungle with his wood; perhaps he is resting, perhaps he is drinking his *jāwa*".'

'I felt as if I should take you away, and talk to you alone, and never hear anyone else's voice again.'

'I never want to hear anyone else either.'

'Do you know what I did in the afternoon, when you had come home and then gone out fishing? I was ploughing, but I felt I must look at you, so I left my plough and hid under a bush by the river. There I could see you fishing and I felt very happy. After a little while I went back to my plough.'

VII. The Sexual Act

Kosra ke kāte asan Muria ke lote. *As is the reaping of millet, so is the intercourse of the Muria.*—Muria proverb

In the ghotul there is no ceremony of sexual initiation, no formal rite of defloration, no permission (save in a few ghotul) is needed from the leaders for the first or any other intercourse. 'Desire is not controlled by rules, nor is our copulation.'

From their earliest days in the ghotul the little chelik and motiari play together until gradually, imperceptibly the vaginal entrance is enlarged and the hymen disappears without a tear. 'We used to behave,' said Nari, 'exactly like little bulls and cows, sporting together till the bull could penetrate.' 'When you sleep with a girl night after night,' said the Antar of Jamkot, 'however small you may be, as long as flesh becomes wood, you try to beat her with it.' And the Budhker of Kapsi described how he quarrelled with his parents and eloped with his still immature wife. 'She was too young, and for a long time I only played with her and was quite happy with that till she was mature.'

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For it is not considered proper for the older boys to have congress with a motiari till she has passed the menarche. 'Real happiness only comes when you are both mature. Of course the kids do it, but without the falling of water there's little pleasure. It is like eating a raw fruit. There is no sweetness in it. It is like rice without salt.' This judgement comes from Kajen; another is from Kabonga. 'To try to have a girl before she is mature is as hard as for a pig to dig up roots. Sometimes it manages it; it gets the root up and enjoys it. But it prefers its ordinary food.' The Kotwar of Temrugaon said, 'The first time I did it was with a little girl and it was very painful. She didn't like it either. One ought not to dig in the field of an immature girl, for one's *pulu* (digging-stick) may get damaged.'

But after a girl's first menstruation, said Raunu of Jhakri, 'everyone plans to be the first'. Even now, however, the girl must not be forced or hurried; she must be wooed, persuaded, loved into yielding. Sometimes girls who are afraid of intercourse succeed in resisting the chelik for a long time. Often the first serious sexual experience of a girl is during a marriage, when everyone is excited and perhaps a little drunk, and no one asks questions or notices what is going on.

The ghotul leaders do not interfere unduly with the young children, but they see that they receive proper sexual training and instruction. 'As a young bullock is broken to the plough, so a young boy is taught.' The evidence for this sort of statement is best presented in actual 'documents'. Here is one from Kapsi.

> A big girl teaches a little boy by letting him fondle her breasts and hug her. Then she opens and spreads her legs and makes the little boy lie on her breasts. She shows him how to open her clothes and insert the little penis with his hand. The first time the boy doesn't know what to do and the juice comes out too soon. But the next day she says, 'You only pressed me last night, nothing was done properly. I had no pleasure'. The boy replies, 'Today I'm really ready; now I know what to do'.

In Munjmeta, the Melia recalled how he learnt to perform the sexual act from the very descriptions of the older boys. And in Markabera, the Diwan said,

> A little boy doesn't need to be taught anything. Does a young crab have to be taught how to dig earth? But the elder boys generally tell them how to do it. When the little boys tell them their secrets and how they tried but failed, the older chelik show them the best way. The older girls do the same for the little girls. Sometimes older girls who get fond of little boys teach them themselves. But we learn everything by being in the ghotul. How can the little boys check themselves? Who doesn't feel a desire to eat when he sees people enjoying a feast in his presence?

Thus from a very early age the young chelik and motiari are trained in sexual technique, both by example and by actual instruction. A boy does not approach his marriage bed a virgin, but neither does he go to it a fool.

The immediate sexual approach and the technique of copulation practised by chelik and motiari are conditioned by the circumstances of ghotul life. Normal sexual congress should take place within the ghotul. It is believed that this precaution lessens the chances of conception (there is a 'safe region' rather than a 'safe period'); it protects boy and girl from the calamitous interference of magic; and it imposes a certain degree of restraint and discipline.

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X883 836 833 Naturally there are many breaches of the rule; at marriages and festivals, on dancing expeditions and during everyday work in field and forest, chelik and motiari unite in intercourse—but this is regarded as irregular, not exactly condemned, but accepted as outside the routine.

This fact alone is sufficient to make the ghotul tradition almost unique. For here is a company of boys and girls, many of them close relatives, who perform the sexual act in public, often in a single room. For it is public, even though veiled by the mask of darkness and a convention that no one should watch his neighbour. In some of the bigger ghotul, of course, the boys and girls are able to thin out a little; they can scatter in the different huts; in the hot weather they can sleep out in the compound. But during a large part of the year chelik and motiari sleep together in one small smoky room. They do not care to leave the warmth and security of their cosy ghotul for the dangerous and inconvenient discomfort of field or jungle. So we find brothers performing the sexual act before their sisters, and elder brothers in the forbidden presence of their younger brothers' 'wives'. Sometimes they are so crowded together that they have great difficulty in achieving coitus without waking up their neighbours.

For this reason, because intercourse must be with all the secrecy possible, without display and without disturbance, the normal method of copulation inside the ghotul is not unlike the characteristic European method—the girl lies prone on her back, and the boy stretches himself upon her, forcing her legs apart and often raising them to place them round his thighs.

But when the lovers meet outside the ghotul, they are able to indulge more varied postures. At Jhakri the chelik knew of four—the girl prone on her back and the youth kneeling or squatting before her; both sitting and facing one another; the youth prone and fully extended above the girl who sometimes raises her legs and sometimes extends them; and both standing, the girl supported against a tree or wall. At Palari, a chelik said, 'Usually we lie flat, but when a boy is very happy he sits above her.'

X883 833 A former Sirdar of Singarpuri described the difference between intercourse with a motiari in a crowded ghotul and with one's own wife in a private room. 'To have a motiari is like living on borrowed money; you are always anxious, and afraid someone will notice what you're doing. But with your own wife at home, you can have her lying down, you can have her standing up, you can have her from the front, you can have her from behind. She is like a good crop which you can eat till you can eat no more.'

But copulation *a posteriori* is generally considered improper. There still linger stories probably imaginary, that the soldiers who raped Muria women during the Rebellion of 1911 took them in this way. There is a ribald story current in the Bara Dongar Pargana of a married couple who wearied of the constant publicity and monotony of intercourse in a crowded home.

> So one day the man took her to the jungle and said they would copulate like horses. He persuaded her, though with great difficulty, to become completely naked. He said, 'Now you lean forward and when I come to you from behind, making love-noises like a horse, you must kick me with one leg'. But they had both forgotten that she was wearing heavy anklets with sharp edges, and when she kicked, one of these cut his lip open, and it has not yet completely healed.

A more tragic, though equally ribald, tale comes from Gorma.

> A husband saw a pair of cranes copulating as he was going home drunk from the liquor-shop. He said in his mind, 'That's how I'll do it tonight'.

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So thinking, he tied a sickle to his nose as a beak, bound a winnowing-fan on each arm, put a broom on his bottom. There he was, a bird. He mounted his wife from behind, flapping his wings and crying *kar-kar-kar*. But he knocked over a lamp, set fire to the house and was burnt to death.

A chelik and motiari generally agree to have congress at the time of the massage. When the girl lays the chelik's hand on her shoulder so that she can massage his arm, he squeezes it in a certain manner. This is how the Kotwar of Chandabera described it.

They have agreed on it. They lie down together on the mat. He has his hand on her breast, but that means nothing. When all are asleep, he makes the sign. I cannot tell you what it is, but we all know it. She says 'Go away' but he knows she means yes. He doesn't kiss her or touch any part of her, save her breasts and shoulders. He raises himself and separates her legs. She at once unties her cloth. When he is on her, she puts his organ in its place with her hand. She says nothing, nor does he. They are very quiet. He must do it hard; unless you sweat, unless your rut (*mast*) leaves you, you are not satisfied. She says, 'Push on, push on (*alena, alena*)'. She won't let him go till she is satisfied. At last the word *Hai* comes from both their lips. They are no more drunken. *Eko lala hewde raiyār asko hong dayār.* When it goes out through her ears, her temper is cooled.

Bindo, the old Muria of Benur, recalled a love affair of sixty years ago.

I used to sleep with the Malko in the ghotul. Though she would be lying by my side, I did not go to her at first, for I was the head of the ghotul and thought I oughtn't to. But after two or four days, Malko caught hold of my penis and put it between her thighs. Even then I did nothing. Then the girl got very angry and refused to sleep with me for some days. But at last she came again to my mat and this time I went to her. After that we often had intercourse together.

This elementary form of masturbation by girls is known as *dinga-dinga* and seems to be common. But it must be noted that it is a preparation for normal intercourse and not (as so often in Africa) a substitute for it. In Masora the chelik said that 'when a motiari wants a boy, she catches hold of his penis and plays with it till he goes to her'.

The function of the clitoris is not unknown. It is usually prominently portrayed in drawings or carvings of the vagina. Its history is traced in the myths. To the male storyteller, it is a slightly ludicrous object, a parody of the penis, and a mention of it never fails to raise a laugh. In intercourse, said a Muria at Sirpurl, 'the clitoris becomes violently agitated when it sees the penis approaching'. The Ahtar of Masora said, 'When it sees the penis coming, the clitoris smiles'.

The Muria believe it is the woman who takes the lead and sets the pace. A curious illustration of this is the fact that, contrary to what I believe to be the almost universal practice in village India, the girl herself undoes her pubic cloth.[1] Elsewhere this is considered immodest in a girl and unmanly in her

[1] 'The fobbs of the sari which are tied in the front are called *tirasi*, which is a very significant word in Indian love-making. The knot of the sari is to be untied by the man when the lovers unite.'—D. Bhagwat, *Folk-songs from the Satpura Valleys* (Bombay, 1949), p. xx.

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833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

833 A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me, 842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure, 833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—for here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

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pregnancy, intercourse should cease after the fifth month: there is unanimous testimony on this point. After childbirth—so many Muria claim—a husband does not approach his wife for one, or even two, years. 'He must not go to her till the child is weaned.' This may possibly be true of a few villages under strong Hill Maria influence, but even there it seems to me doubtful. There is certainly a desire, however, to space confinements properly and 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain'. But the ground dries long before this.

Elsewhere I have heard it said that 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'—an important point, in that it places the responsibility for resuming intercourse on the woman. In Alor, the Muria said that a period of six months was sufficient, in Chandabera that intercourse was resumed when the child first smiled. In Chameli the villagers spoke of a case where a child had died because the mother gave birth to another during the lactation period of the first. 'The child drank the milk of blood.'

These 'holidays' serve a valuable psychological, as well as a physiological, purpose. In the ghotul, where their close and constant contact might easily make chelik and motiari utterly weary of one another, life is frequently broken up. For months the chelik go to watch in the fields, and the motiari are alone in the ghotul. The menstruating girl is not only sexually taboo; she does not come to the ghotul at all—and is all the more welcome when she reappears. The arrangement that chelik and motiari should go on separate dancing expeditions is psychologically sound, as is proved by the enthusiastic welcome they receive on their return.

VIII. Love-charms

In an atmosphere like that of the ghotul, where frustration and sexual anxiety are comparatively rare, the use of love-charms is less common than among other aboriginal people. But the Muria are acquainted with such charms and sometimes use them, though the results may not always be permanent. 'If I get a girl in this way,' said a Muria at Remawand, 'my store of rice grows less, for such a union is not a yoking of Mahapurub's house. The true yoking comes of its own accord.' It is said that 'girls won by magic run by deceit'.

The charms are generally based on simple principles of sympathetic magic. For example, at Alor the Gaita said that the way to win a reluctant lover was to pursue a pair of *sarus* cranes. These cranes, as is well known, always go about in pairs, and it is said that if one of them dies its mate will quickly follow suit.

> When the cranes fly up into the air one or two feathers may fall. One of these must be caught before it reaches the ground. Then offer it liquor and a black chicken, burn it, tie the ashes in a little bundle to your waist and somehow or other touch the girl with it. Then you will love each other like a pair of cranes. But this is a dangerous charm for as the two cranes always die together so if the girl dies you will die too.

Another curious charm comes from Gorma.

> When you go to relieve yourself, wait till a pig comes along to eat your excreta. Leaving your cloth undone, jump on the pig and pull out a little hair from the back of its neck or forehead. Tie the hair in your cloth and do yourself up. Wait till a Sunday, and then push the

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and went out to find them. They searched for many days and at last when they were almost weary of their chase, they discovered Neng Mudial near the pile of bricks for the great fort he hoped to make. Neng Mudial was sitting at his food and asked them to wait a moment; he would discuss matters when he had finished. But they were so angry that they cut off his left hand. Then they threw him on the ground and cut off his testicles and penis. They threw the testicles to Chandabera, where they turned into stone and may still be seen. They threw his penis to Ban-Chapai and it is there to this day. The old man himself turned into a stone. Then the brothers found their wives and killed them all and returned sadly to Chaurang, where they died and are worshipped even now.[1]

The cult of Neng Mudial is still maintained at Chandabera, Bandopal and Bongapal, and annual offerings are made to his stones. The chelik believe that if after offering sacrifices they scrape a little from the stone testicle or penis and give it to their girls, these will be as certainly enticed as were the wives of Tande and Gunshi.

Closely allied to the use of love-charms is that of some sort of aphrodisiac. The Muria generally believe that a meat diet is useful for this, and especially the virile organs of the bear or goat.

It sometimes happens that when a motiari has succeeded in humbling a boy, taunted him with his lack of vigour and rather conspicuously bestowed her favours elsewhere, he wants to be revenged upon her. In order to do this, he prepares a very powerful tonic according to this prescription:

> Find a two- or three-year-old *dodka* cucumber plant with a parasite on it. Climb up without throwing your shadow on it and pick a bit without using your nails. Burn it and tie the ashes in a little bundle. Keep it in the house where the shadow of a menstruous woman or witch will not fall on it. Then at the time of intercourse tie it on your wrist or elbow and your thing will be as large as the cucumber and you can humble any girl who has scorned you.

An interesting use of a love-charm was recorded at Kabonga. The Sirdar told us that shortly after marriage, he was planning to elope with the Salki whom he had loved as a chelik. 'But my wife made a love-charm, and I fell in love with my own wife, and forgot the Salki.'

IX. IMPOTENCE

Stekel begins his great work on *Impotence in the Male* with a solemn warning. 'In men love-inadequacy is increasing to an alarming degree, and impotence has come to be a disorder associated with modern civilization . . . The percentage of relatively impotent men cannot be placed too high. In my experience, hardly half of all civilized men enjoy normal potency. Nowadays ejaculatio praecox is no longer a disorder; it is the regular accompaniment of civilization.'[2] Among the Muria, however, cases of impotence of any kind are extremely rare. It is, I think, possible to affirm this with confidence,

[1] For a somewhat similar legend of Nakti turned into stone, cf. *JBORS*, Vol. II, p. 214.

[2] W. Stekel, *Impotence in the Male* (English Translation, New York, 1939), p. 1. Compare also Dickinson's judgement. 'Our most grievous male problem of maladjustment is premature ejaculation and it is only second in disastrous effect to blundering technique'. —R. L. Dickinson, *Human Sex Anatomy* (London and Baltimore, 1933), p. 82.

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because nobody has any reticence in discussing the subject. It is in fact one of the things the people rather enjoy telling you, it is something unusual and interesting—a rather cruel joke, but still a joke. Out of 2000 married men, only 3 were absolutely impotent and only 9 relatively impotent—these admitted that their wives had betrayed them because 'they could not satisfy them', almost certainly a reference to ejaculatio praecox.

In view of this it is strange to read in Stekel: 'One may attempt to solve this question by studying the erotic life of primitive races. It is erroneous to think that primitive peoples experience a richer sexuality and possess a stronger sexual appetite than civilized man. On the contrary, exhaustive research proves that sexuality in primitive races is subject to numerous limitations and reveals a more rut-like (periodic) character. Their erotic life is poor in comparison with the ecstasies of civilized man. The psychic component of love is almost unknown to them.' When we turn to the footnote to see what Stekel means by 'exhaustive research' we find references to only two books—Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and Buschan's *Die geschlechtlichen Aeusserungen der Naturvölker im Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften*. As a matter of fact, there has hardly been any research at all, let alone any 'exhaustive research', into the sexual life of primitive man. Such intimate knowledge as we have is far from supporting Stekel's generalizations, which appear to be based on the opinions of missionaries, officials and travellers, the most untrustworthy of all informants.

Muria libido, I agree, is somewhat weak, but since Muria institutions are well adapted to correct this deficiency, the matter is of little practical importance. The essential point remains. Out of 2000 marriages, only 12 were ruined by impotence. Had they been in civilization, according to Stekel the figure might have been in the neighbourhood of 1000.

In Muria society impotence is rare as a fact; it is very common as an accusation. This will account for the comparatively large vocabulary of terms, mainly Halbi and Chhattisgarhi, used to describe it, for to a Muria girl a sexual failure of twenty-four hours merits the charge. The words, however, are not really very unkind or scornful. *Tersa* means 'crooked', *thotha* means 'blunt', *baila* means 'a bullock' and, after all, a bullock *is* a very useful animal. Other words are *harba* (small), *langa* (crooked) and *murda* (a corpse). *Thât si ute* means that 'the cart pole does not rise into position'. The only Gondi word for this condition is the interesting *doko*, which is a negative form of *dokina* or *tokhna*, meaning 'to peck'. This word is often used of chickens which refuse to eat consecrated rice at a festival and *doko*, therefore, seems to imply the inability to peck at one's proper food. The fact that only one of these expressions is in Gondi still further emphasizes the absence of impotence among the unsophisticated aboriginals. Moreover the rather tolerant attitude implied in these terms of abuse suggests that the condition is sufficiently rare for no one to trouble himself very much about it.

In the ghotul, however, an impotent boy may have rather a bad time. 'God was making a woman but forgot what he was doing and stuck a bit of skin by mistake in front of the corpse,' said one pert motiari at Binjhli. 'If I were a man and like that, I would drown myself in the river,' said another. 'She is angry, for *he* keeps her dry as ashes: if he says a word, she is on fire.' 'A tree cannot grow without water, nor can love.' I have given at the beginning of this chapter the remarkable document that was recorded at Palli in which a girl who was unfortunate enough to be married to an impotent youth expressed her feelings. I have a taunt song on similar lines from Chikhli.

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Here's a twig of the ebony tree,
Here's the twig you were telling me of.
No one can use it at either end.
I have offered water in a brass pot,
I have offered gruel in a leaf-cup,
I have served him rice in a dish,
I have given him curry in a leaf-cup,
But he does not speak to me.
He doesn't know what to do.
I cannot live just looking at his house,
I cannot live just to fill my belly.
I can only live if my heart is filled.
I will go away to my father's house.
How can I live so long without my proper work?

The symbols in this song are sexual. The brass pot, the leaf-cup, the dish offered by the girl to her husband, and his useless toilet-twig are recognized symbols of the female and male genitalia. In the concluding lines the girl declares, as she did at Palli, that life is something more than just looking after a house or filling one's stomach with food. The word in the eighth line which I have translated 'He does not speak to me' also means 'He does not have intercourse with me' and thus gives the key to the whole song.

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'An impotent chelik's life in the ghotul is not altogether intolerable, for there are nearly always more boys than girls, and it does not matter very much if one of them has to sleep alone. But once the boy has got married, his position becomes desperate. A former Kotwar of the Kapsi ghotul was impotent. To cover his embarrassment he used to leave his wife at home and go to sleep in the ghotul. Naturally he was not very popular there, and after a time the motiari began to try to turn him out. They escorted him dancing and singing home to his wife, made him take her by the hand and said to her, 'Here's your husband. Sleep with him, beat him, do something with him; we don't want him in our ghotul'. Then they took a chicken from the house and went away, thus suggesting that they had again performed the final marriage rite when bride and bridegroom are put to bed together. After this had happened two or three times, the unfortunate youth gave up going to the ghotul—for he could not afford the continual loss of chickens—and went to sleep in any empty verandah or disused shed.

Boys who are married to older girls are accused by their wives of sexual inadequacy. A boy at Jamkot said, 'My wife was much older; how could my little penis please her? She used to go to her mother's house, and when I went to fetch her back, would say, "Do you think I can be happy sleeping with your pots and dishes? I want a man to live with".' At Karanji, the Mukhwan was also married to an older girl. 'My first wife was always dissatisfied because of my small penis. She used to leave me at home and go to dance the Chait Parab dances, for she came from the lowlands, and loved them. At last she met a man there who could please her, and left me. But my next wife was very happy.'

Such impotence is, of course, merely a symptom of immaturity. So also may be the cases reported of cheliks who, though fully potent in the ghotul, find themselves impotent with their wives. This is usually attributed to a jealous motiari who resents her chelik being married to someone else. Ghasia, a very old Muria of Garha, recalls how in his youth the Pissa of the ghotul was in love with him, and when he refused to marry her, made him impotent

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by magic on his wedding-night with the result that his bride left him the next morning. But after the usual sacrifices, he was cured and claims that he was able to embrace his wife three or four times every night. At Karagaon a chelik was married when he was very young, but continued to live in the ghotul (which was *jodiddr*) and was paired off with a much older motiari. When the time came for the boy to live with his wife, this motiari made him impotent by her magic so that he would always come to the ghotul and not stay with his wife. Unfortunately the charm was so powerful that the boy was impotent in the ghotul as well as in his house and both girls deserted him. After the Siraha had diagnosed the trouble, his parents offered food-sacrifice, and the boy recovered.

X. Sexual Deviations

'Investigation among a number of primitive peoples,' says Seligman, 'fails to discover any cessation of overt heterosexual interests during the years of the alleged latent period.'[1] This seems to be a sounder view than that expressed by older writers on the subject who, drawing much information from travellers' reports, ascribed to the aboriginal every form of sexual perversion. 'Among a large number of primitives,' says Muller-Lyer,[2] 'vices are to be observed which rank with those of Babylon and London . . . running the whole gamut from shameless eroticism through masturbation, tribadism, pederasty, and sodomy to the most obscene perversions.' 'Primitive men,' says Briffault,[3] 'exhibit no greater delicacy in regard to the satisfaction of their sexual instincts than in their diet. The objects that gratify the former are often as disgusting to us as those which satisfy their appetite'; and he goes on to speak of 'homosexual atrocities unknown to European vice and Nasamonian rites, the disgusting character of which passes all conception'. Most of the writers who so freely attribute to primitives the vices of Babylon and London have never themselves lived in primitive society; they are content to accept the biased views of missionaries and the highly-coloured exaggerations of travellers. It is remarkable that those who have lived among primitives with an open and scientific mind are generally of another opinion. Without question Seligman's view is true, probably of all Indian aboriginals, certainly of the Muria.

It is only where an imported prudery has disturbed the even course of ghotul life that there may be found an occasional deviation from the normal. In the Kalpatti Pargana, where the influence of Chhattisgarhi Gond has succeeded in sending the motiari home after spending an hour or two rousing the chelik to a high degree of unsatisfied tumescence, masturbation is not uncommon. I do not know what else the 'reformers' would expect. At Khutgaon a chelik said, 'After the girls have gone we feel lonely and dissatisfied, so we catch hold of the *khairkuta* [a tree which shakes - the penis] and milk it like a cow till the seed comes out. This is our pleasure'. In a few other ghotul also, where the girls go home for the night, I have been told that masturbation is practised as a measure of relief.[4]

[1] Seligman in *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 213. Compare B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, p. 53.

[2] F. Muller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage* (London, 1930, translation of the Munich edition of 1913), p. 37.

[3] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 398. Another writer taking the same view is Bloch, *The Sexual Life of our Times*, pp. 512ff.

[4] This kind of deviation, temporary and compensatory in character, has been observed for various animals. Allen quotes Bate who observed frogs that, unable to find suitable partners at mating-time, attempted to copulate with pieces of floating wood. Allen, op. cit., p. 10. Jenkins found that if rats were segregated sexually, homosexual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year. How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. JEALOUSY

Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough: 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 302.
[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

before he could catch him. He took his wife home and tried to force her to give him the name of her lover. When she refused, he took his axe and struck his little daughter who was standing by and crying with fright, and killed her instantly. He then tried to kill his wife who was carrying her baby in a cloth passed round her shoulder, but she managed to escape. Deva picked up the body of his dead child and carried it into the jungle where he left it under a tree covered with a cloth. The Court was sceptical about Deva's accusations of his wife's unchastity, particularly because he could not give the names of her lovers. But this seems to me entirely in keeping with a Maria's pride, particularly if Deva knew that the seducer was someone in a forbidden relationship or someone whom he disliked. Although some aboriginals have no shame in these matters, others are very reluctant to admit the actual names of men who have seduced their wives.

There is the curious point that, according to one version of the incident, Deva asked his wife to give him tobacco or, in other words, to have sexual intercourse with him, and her refusal to do so was the final spark that caused the explosion. This again is, I think, in line with primitive psychology. The husband would have been powerfully excited sexually by the thought of his wife being possessed by another man; he would desire to reassert his rights over her and perhaps to test her. Her refusal to do what he wanted proved to him that his suspicions were well founded.

A very influential man named Nanda, who was the Siraha of Killepal, met his death on the night of the festival of the Village Mother in April 1932. Nanda and Poyami Panda had married two sisters and both families lived in one compound with the old father-in-law. For some time past Panda had suspected Nanda of an intrigue with his wife Hirme. He had been foolish enough to go to the Tea Gardens leaving her behind in too close an association with the exciting and important personality of the Siraha. When he returned he displayed many of the symptoms of pathological jealousy. He was continually asking his wife whether she had had intercourse with Nanda, and he tried hard to get her to leave the village, where she lived in such

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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674 approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side [833] of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of [697] fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

762 578 Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her [607] husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was